DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 315 233 RC 017 289

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TITLE Implementing and Evaluating the Life-Centered Career Education Curriculum.
PUB DATE Mar 89
NOTE 10p.; In: Education and the Changing Rural Community: Anticipating the 21st Century. Proceedings of the 1989 ACRES/NRSSC Symposium. See RC 017 257.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Education; Curriculum Research; Demonstration Programs; *Education Work Relationship; Evaluation Methods; *Experimental Curriculum; High Schools; *Job Skills; Learning Disabilities; *Special Education; Student Evaluation; Transitional Programs; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Employment Enhancement Strategies; Life Centered Career Education

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) Curriculum and Employment Enhancement Strategies (EES) for mildly disabled students. Special education high school graduates encounter many difficulties in assuming community living and work roles. EES materials are consistent with the competencies and subcompetencies of the occupational domain of the LCCE Curriculum and address on-the-job interpersonal skills, vocational coping skills, vocational decision-making and job-seeking skills. The universities of Missouri-Columbia and Arkansas have been observing school districts using the LCCE/EES materials with learning-disabled students. The project involves six sites in Missouri, California, Minnesota, and Arkansas. Project elements to be evaluated during the 4-year demonstration project include assessment and implementation strategies, an inservice training program, a cross-agency training program, and a service delivery monitoring system. The two major components of the program are assessment and instruction. Students' LCCE competency attainment is assessed using a curriculum-based instrument measuring career education knowledge and performance. The LCCE instruction component is composed of 97 skill units, each of which includes a comprehensive discussion of important teaching considerations, lesson plans for career education stages, and lesson plan evaluations. Initial data on students in the demonstration districts indicate that many support systems and materials are required to improve career education for learning disabled students in secondary school settings. This document includes a chart of the LCCE competencies and subcompetencies. (TES)

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Implementing and Evaluating the Life-Centered Career Education Curriculum

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Rural Special Education Teachers' Institute

Ninth Annual Conference on American Council on Rural Special Education

March 4-5, 1989

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

RC017289

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Implementing and Evaluating the Life-Centered Career Education Curriculum

Follow-up data (Bellamy, 1985) indicate that special education graduates continue to encounter many difficulties in assuming community living and working roles. To overcome this problem, secondary schools need to offer mildly handicapped students a sequenced career education curriculum with opportunities for community employment experiences (Elrod & Lyons, 1987). Simply requiring additional academic credits is not enough to prepare many students for the demands of the school to work transition (Brolin, Loyd, & Roessler, 1989).

Materials do exist to meet the need for a career education curriculum with a strong employment emphasis. For example, Roessler (1988) and Elrod and Lyons (1987) recommended the adoption of the Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) Curriculum (Brolin, 1989) and Employment Enhancement Strategies (EES). Developed at the University of Missouri-Columbia under the direction of Donn E. Brolin, the LCCE curriculum is a competency-based program which infuses daily living, personal-social, and occupational skills instruction into the academic subject matter. The focus is on 22 major competencies (See Figure 1) that research has found to be critical for successful adult adjustment in employment and independent community living. The 22 competencies are further subdivided into 97 subcompetencies that can be taught in both regular and special classes depending on the nature of the school and its personnel. The curriculum program contains a comprehensive curriculum guide, 97 LCCE subcompetency instructional units, an assessment inventory (LCCE Inventory), and an inservice training program so school personnel can be trained to implement the program and design their transitional efforts around it.

The EES materials are consistent with the competencies and subcompetencies of the occupational domain of the LCCE Curriculum. Recently developed and validated in rehabiliation settings by the Arkansas Research and Training Center in Vocational Rehabilitation, the EES assessment and instructional materials have been incorporated in the LCCE occupational domain (Roessler, Johnson, & Schriner, 1988). The EES materials include assessment measures and training packages which address on-the-job social/interpersonal skills; vocational coping skills; vocational exploration, decision-making, and choice-making skills; and job seeking skills. Published materials for each of these critical employability skill areas include a teacher's manual, student's workbook, audio and video instructional tapes, and related printed materials. Together the products form a complete curriculum for developing important elements of a student's work personality.

Overview of Project

Several school districts are working with the universities of Missouri-Columbia and Arkansas to demonstrate the LCCE/EES

LIFE-CENTERED CAREER EDUCATION (LCCE) CURRICULUM (Revised 1/87)

Curriculum Area	Competency	Subcompetency: The student will be able to:						
DAILY LIVING SKILLS	1. Managing Personal Finances	1. Count money & make correct change	2. Make responsible expenditures	3. Keep basic financial records	4. Calculate & pay taxes	5. Use credit responsibly	6. Use banking services	
	2. Selecting & Managing a Household	7. Maintain home environment	8. Use basic appliances and tools	9. Select adequate housing	10. Set up household	11. Maintain home grounds		
	3. Caring for Personal Needs	12. Demonstrate knowledge of physical fitness, nutrition & weight	13. Exhibit proper grooming & hygiene	14. Dress appropriately	15. Demonstrate knowledge of common illness, prevention & treatment	16. Practice personal safety		
	4. Raising Children & Meeting Marriage Responsibilities	17. Demonstrate physical care for raising children	18. Know psychological aspects of raising children	19. Demonstrate marriage responsibilities				
	5. Buying, Preparing & Consuming Food	20. Purchase food	21. Clean food preparation areas	22. Store food	23. Prepare meals	24. Demonstrate appropriate eating habits	25. Plan eat balanced meals	
	6. Buying & Caring for Clothing	26. Wash/clean clothing	27. Purchase clothing	28. Iron, mend & store clothing				
	7. Exhibiting Responsible Citizenship	29. Demonstrate knowledge of civil rights & responsibilities	30. Know nature of local, state & federal governments	31. Demonstrate knowledge of the law & ability to follow the law	32. Demonstrate knowledge of citizen rights & responsibilities			
	8. Utilizing Recreational Facilities & Engaging in Leisure	33. Demonstrate knowledge of available community resources	34. Choose & plan activities	35. Demonstrate knowledge of the value of recreation	36. Engage in group & individual activities	37. Plan vacation time		
	9. Getting Around the Community	38. Demonstrate knowledge of traffic rules & safety	39. Demonstrate knowledge & use of various means of transportation	40. Find way around the community	41. Drive a car			
PERSONAL-SOCIAL SKILLS	10. Achieving Self Awareness	42. Identify physical & psychological needs	43. Identify interests & abilities	44. Identify emotions	45. Demonstrate knowledge of physical self			
	11. Acquiring Self Confidence	46. Express feelings of self-worth	47. Describe others perception of self	48. Accept & give praise	49. Accept & give criticism	50. Develop confidence in oneself		
	12. Achieving Socially Responsible Behavior	51. Develop respect for the rights & properties of others	52. Recognize authority & follow instructions	53. Demonstrate appropriate behavior in public places	54. Know important character traits	55. Recognize personal roles		
	13. Maintaining Good Interpersonal Skills	56. Demonstrate listening & responding skills	57. Establish & maintain close relationships	58. Make & maintain friendships				
	14. Achieving Independence	59. Strive toward self-satisfaction	60. Demonstrate self-organization	61. Demonstrate awareness of how one's behavior affects others				
	15. Making Adequate Decisions	62. Locate & utilize sources of assistance	63. Anticipate consequences	64. Develop & evaluate alternatives	65. Recognize nature of a problem	66. Develop goal seeking behavior		
	16. Communicating with Others	67. Recognize & respond to emergency situations	68. Communicate with understanding	69. Know subtleties of communication				
OCCUPATIONAL GUIDANCE AND PREPARATION	17. Knowing & Exploring Occupational Possibilities	70. Identify remunerative aspects of work	71. Locate sources of occupational & training information	72. Identify personal values met through work	73. Identify societal values met through work	74. Classify jobs into occupational categories	75. Investigate local occupational & training opportunities	
	18. Selecting & Planning Occupational Choices	76. Make realistic occupational choices	77. Identify requirements of appropriate & available jobs	78. Identify occupational aptitudes	79. Identify major occupational interests	80. Identify major occupational needs		
	19. Exhibiting Appropriate Work Habits & Behavior	81. Follow directions & observe regulations	82. Recognize importance of attendance & punctuality	83. Recognize importance of supervision	84. Demonstrate knowledge of occupational safety	85. Work with others	86. Meet demands for quality work	87. Work at a satisfactory rate
	20. Seeking, Securing & Maintaining Employment	88. Search for a job	89. Apply for a job	90. Interview for a job	91. Know how to maintain good school/occupational adjustment	92. Demonstrate knowledge of competitive standards	93. Know how to adjust to changes in employment	
	21. Exhibiting Sufficient Physical-Manual Skills	94. Demonstrate stamina & endurance	95. Demonstrate satisfactory balance & coordination	96. Demonstrate manual dexterity	97. Demonstrate sensory discrimination			
	22. Obtaining Specific Occupational Skills			There are no specific subcompetencies as they depend on skill being taught				

Figure 1.

• Career Development Projects
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materials with students who have intellectual and specific learning disabilities. The purpose of this 4-year federally-funded project is to identify practical strategies for implementing the LCCE/EES curriculum in other school districts and to determine whether the curriculum contributes to more successful adult outcome for students. The project's final products will be (a) a comprehensive curriculum-based assessment package entitled the LCCE Inventory (knowledge and performance batteries), (b) a comprehensive set of LCCE Instructional Units (97), and (c) an implementation guide for organizing, planning, conducting, and evaluating the LCCE Curriculum Program.

The LCCE/EES Project involves six field-sites (Bolivar, MO; Brainerd/Aitkin, MN: Joplin, MO: Richmond, CA; St. Cloud, MN; and Branch, AR) in developing and field-testing the LCCE/EES curricula methodologies. Project elements to be evaluated include assessment and implementation strategies, an inservice training program, a cross-agency training program, and a service delivery monitoring system. Each field-site appointed a coordinator and LCCE Team (teachers, administrators, parents, and community agency personnel) to work closely with project staff in designing and implementing the various activities of the project. Subjects for the study include equal numbers of MMH or SLD sophomores, juniors, and seniors, 15-30 project students in each of the six field sites.

During the first project year the Field-Site Coordinator and LCCE Team determined the contextual barriers to implementing the innovation (LCCE/EES Curricula), suggested ways to resolve the barriers, and involved school personnel in critiquing implementation plans. Additional first year field site activities included (a) revision of LCCE/EES instructional and assessment materials, (b) modification of project materials into a workable model, (c) administration of the twelfth grade control group assessment, (d) development of the LCCE/EES teacher training program, and (e) periodic meetings with project staff. Project years two through four involve the field-sites in implementing the innovation which includes student assessment, instruction, and post-testing upon graduation. Follow-up studies with the graduated groups (1988, 1989, & 1990) on post-school community living and working adjustment will be conducted during the summer of each year of the project.

Assessment

The first of two major implementation activities involves assessing students' LCCE competency attainment using the LCCE Inventory. Designed to accompany the Life-Centered Career Education Curriculum, the LCCE Inventory is a curriculum-based assessment instrument measuring the career education knowledge and skills of special education students. It is composed of a Knowledge Battery and a Performance Battery that are appropriate for assessing the career education knowledge and skills of special education students classified as Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMH) or Specific Learning Disabled (SLD). Prepared

for secondary students, grades 7-12, the Inventory provides data that assist teachers in determining students' competency levels and their instructional needs in 21 of the 22 competency areas of the LCCE Curriculum. Inventory results also pertain to the objectives and goals in the students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Through use of the LCCE Inventory, teachers are able to monitor the progress of students in mastering the instruction in each of the LCCE Curriculum competency areas.

Teachers may choose to use the two LCCE batteries in a number of different ways, depending on the teacher's instructional and evaluation style, students' needs, the time and resources available, and the skills being taught. The various methods for using the Inventory are explained in greater detail in the User's Guide found in the LCCE Curriculum Guide. For example, the primary purpose of the Inventory is to enable teachers to determine whether or not students have mastered needed skills. This is chiefly a diagnostic function for individual students. In addition, the Inventory allows teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of specific instructional units for an entire class.

The Knowledge and the Performance Batteries make it possible to evaluate both the information possessed by students and the career education skills they can demonstrate. Hence, the instructional goals identified from assessment results address indepth educational needs of a particular student. Two batteries were developed because knowledge is not always a valid predictor of a student's ability to perform needed skills. All the subcompetencies of the LCCE Curriculum are tested in the Performance Battery. The Knowledge Battery does not evaluate seven of the ninety-seven subcompetencies. Because they contain strictly performance skills, subcompetencies #10, #11, #81, #94, #95, #96, and #97 are evaluated on the Performance Battery but not on the Knowledge Battery.

Knowledge Battery. The Knowledge Battery is a two form standardized criterion-referenced instrument (Form A & B) developed for 7th to 12th grade EMH and SLD students in special education. Each form uses 400 objective questions to assess a student's knowledge in 20 critical life competency areas (20 items per competency). The Knowledge Battery consists of 3 parts (Daily Living, Personal-Social, & Occupational) covering 20 of the 22 competencies. Competency #21 and Competency #22 are not assessed in terms of knowledge because they stress the demonstration of manual and specific occupational skills.

The Knowledge Battery was developed by using the instructional objectives of the LCCE Curriculum as guidelines for the test items. Representing the important content areas of the curriculum, the instructional objectives provide the basis for the development of test items that comprehensively treat each subcompetency area. Depending on the number and ability level of the examinees, each form (A and B) requires from four to five hours to administer. The Knowledge Battery is designed for

small to medium size group administration (5-15 students). When larger groups are tested, even using proctors, the resulting scores are likely to be lower and less accurate estimates of the students' true skills. This effect of group size is particularly noticeable with EMH students.

Items should be presented to examinees both verbally by the examiner and in written form in the test booklet. Verbal presentation is recommended because the reading skills of examinees may vary above and below the fourth grade reading level, the level at which the Battery was written.

Performance Battery. The Performance Battery is currently being standardized through field-testing in the LCCE/EES project. Through its 21 tests, the Performance Battery assesses each of the subcompetencies of 21 of the 22 competency areas. Each of the tests in the Performance Battery specify: (a) the materials needed for assessment; (b) directions to the evaluator; and (c) directions to the student. In addition, a score sheet lists the performance tasks to be evaluated as well as the criteria for determining mastery. Some performance tests can be administered to groups of students, while others require individual administration. Because Competency 22 addresses a wide range of specific occupational skills, it is not included in the Performance Battery.

Student Assessment. Each field-site coordinator administered the LCCE Knowledge Battery to all project sophomores, juniors, and seniors in the Fall of 1988. For the purposes of the study, Performance tests were administered only when the students mastered the parallel Knowledge Battery competency tests (17+ correct out of 20).

After administration of the LCCE Inventory, scores were transferred to the Student Competency Assessment Record (SCAR) which profiles the student's test results on all competency tests for both the Knowledge and Performance Batteries. The last column (Mastery Level) of the SCAR indicates the level of mastery attained for each competency. If a student meets the criterion on both tests for a competency, he/she receives a M (Mastery). If the criterion is met on only one test, the student receives a P (Partial mastery). If the criterion is not met on either test, the student is given a N (Not mastered). The SCAR clearly represents the student's status relative to the LCCE Competencies which is valuable information for development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Instruction

The second major implementation activity is the instructional component of the project. Instruction involves the use of the 97 LCCE Instructional Units developed to cover all the skills for the LCCE/EES Curriculum. These units were written in part by teachers and have been extensively reviewed by experts in the field. Each unit includes (a) a comprehensive introduc-

tion discussing important teaching considerations, (b) lesson plans for three career education stages (awareness, exploration, and preparation), and (c) lesson plan evaluations. Each lesson plan contains activities for one or more of the subcompetency objectives that students need to master. The units have incorporated educational and training experiences in school, home, and community settings.

Instructional needs for each subject in the study are determined from the results listed on the SCAR. Project students receive competency (all subcompetency units) instruction for the competencies they either did not or partially mastered. The remaining years of the project are devoted to determining the impact of the instruction on the career education skills and life outcomes of students in the demonstration school districts.

Findings

Data are currently being gathered on the impact of the LCCE/EES curriculum on the students in the six demonstration school districts. During an earlier stage of the project, considerable effort was devoted to a study of the barriers encountered in implementing a career education curriculum. These barriers were identified first in terms of the current literature on career education (Roessler, 1988) and secondly from the results of a strategic planning interview conducted by project staff with the LCCE teams in each of the participating school districts (Loyd, Roessler, & Brolin, 1989).

Results of the barriers investigations indicated that many supporting systems and materials are required to improve career education in secondary school settings. For example, measures are needed to assess student instructional needs, and planning documents are required that encourage the selection of employment and life skill related educational goals for students. Attention must also be paid to the extent that students generalize their classroom career education training to living and working environments outside of the school. Finally, support of career education goals by school administrators, family members, social agencies and employers is essential.

Implementation

All LCCE Team teachers in each field-site received inservice training prior to the intervention component of the research project. This one day training program introduced the teachers to the instructional materials (units), instructional management planning strategies, instructional evaluation techniques, instructional monitoring process, and follow-up procedures. Important elements of the LCCE/EES teacher training program are presented in the ACRES Rural Special Education Teachers' Institute.

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